

REMARKS

Prior to this Reply, Claims 1-9, 11, 13, 14, 17-25 and 27-41 were pending. Through this Reply, Claims 11 and 29-31 have been amended, while Claims 42-54 have been added. In addition, Claims 19 and 20 have been cancelled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter contained therein. Accordingly, Claims 1-9, 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21-25 and 27-54 are now at issue in the present case.

I. Allowable Subject Matter

Applicants note, with appreciation, the Examiner's indication of the allowability of Claims 1-9, 23-25, 27, 28 and 32-41. Applicants have not amended such claims. Accordingly, Applicants still believe that such claims are allowable.

The Examiner also objected to Claim 20 as being dependent upon a rejected base claim. However, the Examiner indicated that such claim would be allowable if it was rewritten in independent form to include the limitations of its base claim and any intervening claims. In response, Applicants have amended independent Claim 11, so that it substantially includes the limitations of objected-to Claim 20. Accordingly, Claim 20 has been cancelled.

Applicants submit that Claim 11 is in condition for allowance. Furthermore, Applicants submit that Claims 13, 14, 17, 18, 21 and 22, which depend from Claim 11, are allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 11.

II. Rejections Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner rejected Claims 11, 13, 14, 17-19, 21, 22 and 29-31 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,476,995 to Liu et al. in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,668,679 to Swearingen et al.

In order to expedite allowance of the present application and without necessarily agreeing with the Examiner's position, Applicants have amended Claim 11 to substantially include the limitations of objected-to Claim 11. Furthermore, Applicants have amended Claims 29-31, so that such claims substantially include the limitations of objected-to Claim 11. Accordingly, the rejections of Claims 11, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21, 22 and 29-31 have been overcome.

In addition, as mentioned above, Claim 19 has been cancelled. Accordingly, the rejection of such claim is now moot.

III. New Claims

Applicants have added new Claims 42-54. No new matter has been added.

Claims 42-47 depend from Claim 27 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 27.

Claims 48-54 depend from Claim 28 and are allowable for at least the same reasons as Claim 28.

IV. Additional Claim Fees

In determining whether additional claim fees are due, reference is made to the Fee Calculation Table (below).

Fee Calculation Table

	Claims Remaining After Amendment		Highest Number Previously Paid For	Present Extra	Rate	Additional Fee
Total (37 CFR 1.16(c))	47	Minus	36	= 11	x \$50 =	\$ 550.00
Independent (37 CFR 1.16(b))	10	Minus	10	= 0	x \$200 =	\$ 0.00

As set forth in the Fee Calculation Table (above), Applicants previously paid claim fees for thirty-six (36) total claims and for ten (10) independent claims. Therefore, Applicants hereby authorize the Commissioner to charge the credit card identified on the enclosed Form PTO-2038 in the amount of \$500.00 for the presentation of eleven (11) total claims over thirty-six (36). Although Applicants believe that no other fees are due, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge Deposit Account No. 50-2198 for any fee deficiencies associated with filing this paper.

V. Conclusion

It is believed the above comments establish patentability. Applicants do not necessarily accede to the assertions and statements in the Office Action, whether or not expressly addressed.

Applicants believe that the application appears to be in form for allowance. Accordingly, reconsideration and allowance thereof is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the below-listed telephone number regarding any matters relating to the present application.

Respectfully submitted,



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